

TRANSPARENT ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE PROJECT

December 2002

The Asia Foundation, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development has been implementing the Transparent Accountable Governance project under the guidance of a Project Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is chaired by the League of Cities (represented by Franklin Quijano, Mayor of Iligan City), and met once during the second half of 2002 (19 December). Committee membership consists of representatives from eight organizations: Makati Business Club, Mindanao Business Council, Transparency and Accountability Network (TAN) (represented by Philippine Governance Forum, as the secretariat of TAN), Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs, the Department of Interior and Local Government and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, The Asia Foundation and the United States Agency for International Development. The steering committee provides overall advice and direction to the project; serves as a venue to ensure coordination, address project related issues and opportunities and review the projects' progress.

From 1999 to 2002 the project built awareness of the cost of corruption, encouraged an agenda to increase transparency and accountability in government transactions and promoted business-NGO-government collaboration in support of good governance.

Building on the successes reaped by the initial national counter corruption efforts and an improved overall political environment for counter corruption reform, the project currently focuses at three levels: 1) national level counter corruption advocacy; 2) extending advocacy efforts to the city level in Mindanao by promoting transparency and accountability in city governance; and, 3) broadening opportunities for peace and economic development in Mindanao through improved local governance especially in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and its neighboring conflict affected areas.

At the national level, efforts are focused on; maintaining broad civil society and private sector engagement, particularly for reforms at the Bureau of Internal Revenue, Ombudsman and the Department of Education, support for legislation promoting transparency in government transactions and information, continuous monitoring of the public's perception on the extent of corruption in the government; continuing outreach and information dissemination and periodic advocacy initiatives of the Transparency and Accountability Network. National level counter corruption advocacy works is being implemented in partnership with the Makati Business Club, Ateneo Center for Social Policy and Public Affairs, Social Weather Stations, de La Salle University's Institute for Governance, Pagbabago@Pilipinas and the Transparency Accountability Network.

In seven cities in Mindanao, with private sector and civil society engagement, serious efforts are being made to improve transparency and accountability through procedural reform in city government systems focusing on simplifying procedures in the city government, reducing monopoly of power and discretion of city employees and increasing transparency and availability of information to citizens of the city government.

Public perception on how city governments perform its mandate are measured through the use of scorecards, of which results are used to guide local chief executives to set policy directions with respect to promoting transparency and accountability in city governments. Capacity building to technical staff that lends support to process reforms are likewise implemented. The project's major partners for this city level work are the League of Cities of the Philippines which also chairs the Project Steering Committee, the Mindanao Business Council and the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs.

In Mindanao municipalities, different sets of activities are being implemented which cover several sectors: municipal governments, civil society organizations and local resource institutions. At the municipal government level, technical assistance is provided to improve local government operations: planning and budgeting, resource mobilization, organizational development, and service delivery. Capacity building both for civil society organizations and local resource institutions is conducted which increase their level of awareness on local governance and how to be an effective partner in a municipal government.

A. The National Level Counter Corruption Advocacy.

Pervasive corruption in the government, including bureaucratic and judicial red tape, is one of the major obstacles to the entry of business investments in the country. Encouraging good governance also encourages investor confidence that business will be successful. Through constant engagement with the private sector and civil society organizations, The Asia Foundation under the Transparent Accountable Governance project seeks to maintain public pressure for counter corruption reforms.

Reforms at the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

In anticipation of the eventual transformation of the Bureau of Internal Revenue into a corporate entity, in June 2002, The Asia Foundation in partnership with the Philippine Governance Forum conducted a consultation with civil society organizations to determine the viability and desirability of transforming the BIR into a corporate entity which resulted in an overwhelmingly positive response from participants.

As an ongoing advocacy for the corporatization of the Bureau, The Asia Foundation in partnership with the De LaSalle Institute for Governance conducted a series of consultation and awareness building activities fora in support of the legislation to create the National Revenue Authority/ Internal Revenue Management Authority. Education and information materials have been produced on proposed BIR reforms and disseminated to the public. This partnership facilitated the formation of the Citizen Watch Program to monitor the current process reforms being undertaken by the Bureau.

The Makati Business Club, another partner of The Asia Foundation for national counter corruption efforts, convened in November 2002 a small group discussion with stakeholders (business associations, accounting firms) and the Commissioners of the BIR

to thresh out and discuss procedural and policy issues facing business groups and accounting firms with respect to paying taxes. The half-day workshop resulted in the identification of potential procedural and policy areas for reforms to counter bribery and corruption in the Bureau.

Following this half day workshop, and with Control Risks Group, the Makati Business Club placed corruption into perspective through a one-day conference entitled Facing Up to Corruption. Held at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel in Makati City, the conference gathered representatives from the government, the business community and civil society to know about the costs and causes of corruption and measures to prevent it. The number of attendees from the private and public sector indicated that people were willing to stand up and fight against corruption. This could also be measured through the questions raised on ways and means to counter bribery and the audience's interest to draft codes of conduct for the public and private sector.

Ombudsman Search Process

The Asia Foundation's partnership with the Transparency and Accountability Network in the Ombudsman Search had stirred civil society involvement in the selection process. A webpage was created for polling the public's choice for the Ombudsman. Voting was done online and weekly results could be easily accessed. Curriculum Vitae of aspiring candidates were distributed to interested organizations for scrutiny of the candidate's qualifications and feedback was solicited. The selection process by the Judicial Bar Council was the most transparent ever, with the interview sessions opened to the public. A documentation report on the search process will soon be published.

Right To Information

As a means to promote transparency in government information, The Asia Foundation continues to work for the passage of Right to Information Bill. Activities currently being undertaken under this initiative are focused on data and information gathering, including identifying champions from the legislative body, the executive, business and civil society sectors, identification of best practices in other countries. This information will contribute to and possibly pattern the mechanics of the legislation and review of existing documents from similar legislation which will aid in the speedy passage of the Bill.

In the last three months of 2002, the Foundation's partner in this advocacy work, Pilipinas@ Pagbabago, has been very active in seeking public support for the legislation. Series of symposia, fora, a media campaign and press conferences were conducted to inform the public and generate public support and pressure. Among the civil society organizations who have been very strong in their support includes: Action for Economic Reform, Legal Rights and Resource Center, Saligan, National Institute for Policy Studies, Transparency and Accountability Network, Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, Kaisahan, Women's Legal Bureau and WOMENLEAD. Public officials who have also exemplified their support to this initiative include the offices of Representatives Joel Villanueva, and Del de Guzman and Senator Francis Pangilinan.

Perception Survey on Corruption

A third round of the Enterprise Survey on Public Sector Corruption was conducted between November to December 2002 to illustrate changes in the scope of the corruption problem covering 500 enterprises (200 large corporations and 300 small/medium scale enterprises). Aside from this, a survey of general public's perception on corruption will also be implemented. These two surveys will have similar questions so as to compare the attitudes of the general public with businessmen and women.

The results of both of these perception surveys will be available for public presentation by April 2003.

Transparency and Accountability Network

In May 2002, The Asia Foundation in partnership with the Transparency and Accountability Network, the Presidential Committee on Effective Governance (PCEG) and the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) conducted a series of workshops with 39 government agencies to craft specific anti-corruption plans. Based on the result of the initial workshop, to find out which of the 39 agencies were receptive to involvement in crafting an anti-corruption plan, ten agencies¹ were selected. The anti-corruption plans crafted by these agencies are expected to be implemented beginning January 2003. Focus group discussions are also planned to incorporate other stakeholders' input into the anti corruption plans of these agencies. Two of these agencies have completed focus group discussions; Customs and Internal Revenue, in partnership with the Makati Business Club. In February 2003, the Department of Health will also conduct its own focus group discussion. The rest of the agencies are targeting to complete their FGDs by April 2003.

On December 4, 2002, the Transparency and Accountability Network convened a Donor's Forum to launch their anti-corruption strategy for the year 2002-2004. The Anti-Corruption Project Through Network Advocacy (ACT-NOW) is TAN's response to the increasingly growing concerns on the scale of corruption in Philippine bureaucracy. The network's consolidated proposal on anti-corruption projects was presented to the attendees for possible funding. Proposals were based on their three-pronged approach to combating corruption: through **prosecution** of corruption cases, **prevention** of occurrences and **promotion** of a corruption-intolerant culture.

Other Initiatives

¹ These include the departments of: Environment and Natural Resources, Health, Justice, Agrarian Reform, Public Works and Highways, National Police, Customs, Internal Revenue and National Labor Reconciliation Commission, and Education.

The Asia Foundation helped organize the Working Meetings on Implementing Good Governance with the Governance Advisory Council in May and November 2002 which produced a broad consensus on governance reforms using the scorecards. The group reached consensus on three major points: it must be used as a tool for monitoring actual progress made towards improving governance practices; it must be pursued by making strategic and realistic choices among those willing to cooperate and those that carry significant weight or strategic importance within their sector; and it must ensure buy-in and close as well as willing participation from the different institutions involved, particularly those whose governance practices are included in the governance scoring among other things.

The Asia Foundation provided a small grant to Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute (GZOPI) to convene an International Conference on Waging Peace in the Philippines on December 10-12, 2002. Attended by over a hundred participants, the conference discussed the current state of conflict resolution in the country, including the viability of using local monitoring teams as an alternative venue for peace building. Two outcomes from the conference expected are that coordination among stakeholders in the peace process will be improved and public constituency for peace will be strengthened.

B. Transparency and Accountability in Mindanao Cities

Beyond the national-level, there is also a growing need for effective counter-corruption efforts at the local level – especially the city level – where the greatest opportunities for economic growth and job creation now exist. The Project's core strategy for addressing city-level corruption in Mindanao is the political commitment of mayors to activities in support of promoting transparency, accountability and the city government's receptivity to process reforms, and partnership with the private sector.

To lend support to this commitment, the project's strategy focuses on building capacity in the cities to restructure services and administration to reduce local corrupt practices that decrease efficiency, increase the cost of doing business, and discourage investment. The key mechanism to accomplish this will be public-private partnerships as the mayor, political officials, and anti-corruption advisors bring in the local private sector, NGOs, academia, and the media to demand reform, help design it, and monitor results.

Major partners for this component include the League of Cities of the Philippines, the Mindanao Business Council, the different academic institutions in Mindanao and the Mindanao Coalition of Development NGOs.

Procedural Reforms

From the series of discussions with the League of Cities in April and May 2002, and based on the overriding criteria of political commitment for reforms of the local chief executives, seven cities were selected to be included in the project. These are: Cotabato, Dapitan, General Santos, Iligan, Island Garden City of Samal, Marawi and Surigao. A series of city visits and consultations were then conducted by The Asia Foundation and the League of Cities between June to July 2002 to ensure commitments of the city governments to the project.

On September 14-20, 2002, twenty six participants, fourteen local chief executives and twelve local officials from the seven selected cities in Mindanao participated in a one-week training on effective local governance at RAND Graduate School in Santa Monica, California. The training, focused on building local officials' capacity to diagnose and assess their local government systems, identify areas where there is less transparency and accountability leading to a higher risk of corruption, and recommend appropriate actions for reforms. As an output, action plans on their reform agenda were drafted by the different cities and were presented in the plenary for refinements.

Prior to actual implementation of reform agendas and in order to determine focus and ensure doability of these agendas, a revalidation workshop was held on December 18, 2002. Based on the discussions, the focus of reforms of the cities were identified as follows: market and slaughterhouse for Cotabato, procurement under the General Service Office for Dapitan, revenue collection and procurement for Iligan, basic housekeeping functions of the city government for Marawi, procurement and shelter for Samal, and revenue enforcement and collection for Surigao. Reform agendas will emphasize simplifying procedures, reducing monopoly of power, limiting discretion of city employees and increasing transparency and availability of information to citizen of city governments. The project will provide technical assistance to each of the seven city governments in the implementation of their respective reform agendas.

To support the reform agenda of the cities, other support activities will be implemented beginning this year. These include: public service excellence program, public service ethics and accountability, training on the new procurement act, e-governance related activities and implementation of the second round of city governance scorecards. Sharing sessions will be conducted to update each of the cities on the progress of the project.

Local Governance Scorecards

One of the major achievements of the training is the shift in the paradigms of the city officials. As compared to before, they are now more willing and open to be rated on how the city government delivers its services. From the last week of October to the first week of November, in partnership with the League of Cities and the Governance Advisory Council, a local governance scorecard activity was undertaken in the seven cities. Focus group discussions were conducted for the private, civil society and government sectors, and the results were discussed with city officials. Despite some results that were not so encouraging, city officials took this with positive note with a view to improve further the way their city government performs its mandate. On November 14, 2002, the League of Cities presented the results to a national workshop on implementing good governance convened by the Governance Advisory Council, and made a commitment that another round of scorecard activities would be undertaken in the middle of 2003, expanded to include some 40 cities.

Private Sector Constituency Building

Coupled with this work in the seven Mindanao cities, The Asia Foundation is also partnering with civil society organizations and the private sector in Mindanao. As a result of this partnership, at the December 4-5 Second Mindanao Forum on Transparent Governance, a Mindanao Coalition for Transparent and Accountable Governance was formed with civil society organizations, business and private sector groups and city governments signing a pact in support of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's pursuit for good governance.

Prior to the Second Mindanao Forum, a series of consultations were conducted with members of the business and private sector from the seven cities by the Mindanao Business Council. The consultation generated recommendations for procedural and policy changes and resolutions complementing efforts between the city government and the private/business sector. The consultation also resulted in the formation of City Coalitions for Transparent Accountable Governance which is being chaired by the president of the city chamber and co-chaired by the local chief executive. The CCTAGs are expected to implement the specific activities identified by the private and business sectors during the city consultations supporting their recommendations for procedural and policy reforms. At the city government level, CCTAG's are expected to actively push for the implementation of the city reform agenda crafted by each of the seven cities.

Community Forum And Advocacy: Ulat ng Bayan

The first "*Ulat ng Bayan*" (community forum) of the Federation of Reporters for Empowerment and Equity was held last October 28, 2002 in Cotabato. The "*Ulat ng Bayan*" serves as citizen's monitoring and sustaining mechanism for the implementation of the covenant which was signed between the people of Cotabato City and the 2001 city political candidates. It also served for as a venue for continuous dialogue between and among the people and elected officials for purposes of threshing out problems and identifying possible areas of common undertakings to improve the quality of service to constituents.

Prior to this "*Ulat ng Bayan*" a series of community consultation were conducted to discuss issues and concerns related to the implementation of the covenant. Through this, citizen participation and contribution to sound governance was identified and defined as well as the citizens' expectations from elected government officials was also aired in the forum.

C. Good Governance for Peace and Development in ARMM Municipalities

This third component focuses on accelerating the development of improved practices in local governance, increasing the interaction between the civil society, the local government and the private sector, and ensuring the sustainability of governance efforts towards peace and development. Through developing local expertise and partnering with local resource institutions, sustainability of such good governance practices is ensured. Key partner institutions during this period include the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, Mindanao State University's Center for Local Governance, Bangsamoro

Womens Foundation for Peace and Development, Muslimah Resources and Integrated Development Center, Kadtuntaya Foundation Inc., Federation of Reporters for Empowerment and Equity, Metro Kutawato Development Alliance and the Network of Elected Filipino Women for Good Governance.

The initial partnership with the League of Municipalities of the Philippines for its project identification and prioritization workshops in five provinces in ARMM in June 2002, has resulted in several on-going technical assistance activities in 19 municipal government units in ARMM. Technical Assistance to date has focused on the areas of resource mobilization and management, local planning and budgeting, participatory governance and organizational strengthening.

Resource Mobilization and Management

One of the basic challenges to good governance is the ability of local government units to mobilize and manage local resources to effectively deliver quality and sufficient service. With the decreasing assistance from the national government in the form of the internal revenue allotment, local governments are beginning to explore other possible sources of revenues to tap innovative approaches to identify additional income to finance and augment the citizens' needs on basic services.

In order to address the perennial problem of so much to deliver with so few resources, The Asia Foundation assists local government units to develop and use their existing resource base as a potential source of revenues through the development of public economic enterprises that are practical, and viable for the local government to manage.

Five municipalities² in Lanao del Sur and 2 municipalities³ in Maguindanao are focused on enterprise development and investment promotions.

The enterprise development and investment promotions modules consist of sessions on sustainable integrated area development and investment promotions framework planning, project development workshop and field coaching. As output, municipal governments' project development teams complete a project feasibility study for an identified strategic project and a business plan. Municipal project teams are also trained how to organize and manage a strategic project's marketing program.

The technical assistance to these seven municipalities was launched on October 9, 2002 in the Provincial Capitol of Lanao Sur. A total of 44 participants attended the orientation and briefing consisting of: 15 provincial and municipal officials, 4 NGA (national line agency) representatives, 20 from local resource institutions including faculty members from the Mindanao State University and 3 from civil society organizations.

² These municipalities in Lanao Sur are: Wao, Bumbaran, Piagapo, Bacolod-Kalawi and Marantao.

³ Those in Maguindanao are the municipalities of Sultan Kudarat and Buluan.

As an initial activity, a theory walk-through/training of trainers workshop was held from October 20-24 and attended by 48 faculty of Mindanao State University, provincial and municipal planners, and representatives from national government agencies and civil society organizations. Trainers completing this program will serve as mentors to municipal project development teams. The first sustainable integrated area development workshop was conducted on December 17-20, 2002 in the municipality of Wao, Lanao Sur. The planning workshop resulted in the identification of the following priorities for feasibility study preparation and project development: an integrated trading center with bus terminal, construction of airport and farm to market roads, construction of 120 low cost housing units and day care centers.

The local resource institution involved in delivering technical assistance on resource mobilization is Mindanao State University's Center for Local Governance. For the Maguindanao municipalities, technical assistance on resource mobilization is provided by Mindanao State University's Maguindanao Center for Research and Extension.

Local Administration Planning and Budgeting

With limited financial resources, local governments exercise prudence in making sure that available resources are well budgeted and managed and go to the development programs and projects that reflect the priorities of the citizenry. To be able to do this, The Asia Foundation provides technical assistance to local governments on planning and budgeting using a methodology that values community participation.

Currently, it provides assistance to nine municipalities in three provinces on barangay administration orientation, planning and budgeting. These nine municipalities cover a total of 90 barangays. Participating municipalities in Lanao Sur are Mulondo and Tamparan; Maguindanao are Ampatuan, SK Pendatun, Datu Paglas, Paglat and Pagagawan and Basilan are Lantauan and Maluso.

The assistance for barangay administration planning and budgeting consist of one-day orientation course on the mandates of barangay governments and roles and functions of barangay officials, and a two-day session on planning, prioritizing and budgeting strategic barangay projects identified.

The one day orientation course is conducted in partnership with local offices of the Department of Interior and Local Government. An initial 125 barangays are being targeted for this orientation course to include 55 in Basilan, 20 in Lanao Sur and 50 in Maguindanao. Currently, 25 barangays, all in Maguindanao have completed the orientation course on Barangay Administration.

The planning and budgeting sessions on the other hand are conducted by trained local facilitators. After the three day workshop, barangays are expected to come up with a concrete document that lays down the priority project the community identified and a barangay resolution for funding support of these strategic priorities.

To date 25 barangay planning and budgeting workshops have been completed. These have all taken place in Maguindanao, and are part of the ninety barangays initially identified in the Autonomous Region. Among those commonly identified priority projects by the barangays are: construction of potable public toilets with potable water, construction of school buildings, health centers, farm to market roads, irrigation and post harvest facilities, provision of power supply, training on local governance for barangay officials, sanggunian kabataan (youth council) members and civil society organizations and entrepreneurship skills.

Mindanao State University's Center for Local Governance provides the assistance in the two Lanao Sur municipalities; the Bangsamoro Women Foundation for Peace and Development assists the five municipalities in Maguindanao and Muslimah Resources and Integrated Development Center provides assistance for the two municipalities in Basilan.

Participatory Governance

To pursue meaningful and sustainable integrated area development which works to accelerate the delivery of basic services from the municipality to the barangays, and ensures that services provided are relevant to the needs of the communities, The Asia Foundation is partnering with the Institute for Strategic Initiatives to provide assistance to the municipalities of Buldon, Barira and Matanog in the province of Maguindanao. The project focuses on promoting participatory governance from the barangay up to the municipal level.

Included in the technical assistance is sectoral organizing formation and planning at the barangay and municipal levels, barangay development planning through participatory rapid appraisal to generate data for use in the barangays and municipalities' five year development plans, annual investment plans and annual operational plans. A training of trainers course on the Basic Orientation on Barangay Governance was conducted for all barangay officials of the 34 barangays of the three municipalities. Additional training opportunities for barangay and municipal officials conducted between August to December included: Direct Action for Local Government Seminar, orientation training for Barangay Development Planning-Participatory Rapid Appraisal for municipal technical working group and barangay facilitators and Facilitators Training on Technology of Participation were conducted between August to December 2002.

Capacity Building to Local Resource Institutions

As the Foundation moves forward with its technical assistance activities at the municipal level in ARMM, it has engaged the participation of local resource institutions willing to be trained either to provide technical assistance or to manage technical assistance activities. In Lanao Sur, six local resource institutions⁴ are building their capacity to provide technical assistance on enterprise development.

⁴ These local resource institutions are: the Mindanao State University Center for Local Governance; the Federation of Lanao Sur Cooperatives (FEDLANS); the Muslim Christian Association for Rural

In Maguindanao, five local resource institutions⁵ are being trained to manage and provide technical assistance in seven municipalities. In Basilan, only one local resource institution⁶ is yet to be engaged for capability building on managing technical assistance

Awareness Building for Bangsamoro Consortium of NGOs

Recognizing the critical role that civil society organizations play in the entire gamut of local governance especially in ARMM, The Asia Foundation has been instrumental in strengthening the Bangsamoro Consortium. This consortium comprises 57 civil society organizations in ARMM and its neighboring conflict affected areas.

The assistance to Bangsamoro Consortium includes awareness building on the Local Government Code and its implementing guidelines, training on Islamic Governance, Advocacy Management and training on Basic Group Facilitation method. The idea is to increase civil society's understanding of the provisions of the local government code, governance and leadership in the Islamic context and to be able to provide skills to enable civil society organizations to conduct effective advocacy programs and constructive dialogs with local government units.

A focus group discussion on the development of the module "Islamic Governance and Leadership" was conducted during the last quarter of 2002 and was attended by 25 participants composed of consortium members and religious leaders. The first draft of the module has come out and lots of fine tuning is still underway. The module hopes to provide basic and important information on Islamic culture and governance.

Strengthening the Metro Kutawato Development Alliance (MKDA)

Support to MKDA is focused on strengthening the current project management office. MKDA was formed two years ago with initial support from Canada's Local Governance Support Program and USAID's Growth with Equity in Mindanao Project. However, previous efforts to keep the organization going have not been sustained because of changes in the composition of the Board whose members were local chief executives of member local government units. The secretariat of the alliance then was housed under the planning office of the city government of Cotabato which was already busy with its regular functions and did not have the time to nurture this organization. At the initiative of Mayor Sema as the Chairman of the Board, a project management office was created with seed funding from AUSAID.

Development (MUCARD); the Kalimudan Foundation; Gender and Development Advocates (GAD) and AlMujadillah Foundation.

⁵ These local resource institutions include the Institute for Strategic Initiatives (ISI); the Bangsamoro Women for Peace and Development (BMWPD); the Mindanao State University- Maguindanao Center for Research and Extension; the Kadtuntaya Foundation and the Metro Kutawato Development Alliance.

⁶ The local resource institution to be tapped in Basilan is Muslimah Resources and Integrated Development Center (MURID).

MKDA's mandate is to provide assistance to member local government units especially on issues or concerns shared by two or more of its members. To effectively do that, technical assistance is being provided to build capacities of project management staff to set directions for the organization. Among the series of activities planned to be conducted with TAG support are: a workshop on the formulation of an operational framework and guidelines of the alliance, the output of which is an operational framework plan for the member local government units and the alliance; training on project development and management specifically focusing on integrated area development with a peace and gender component including preparation of a feasibility study for an identified project and marketing, technical and financial plans; project packaging and access to financing; a sectoral strategic planning workshop that will bring civil society participation to help identify specific priority projects, and social marketing training to map out various strategies to sell and promote the projects identified.

A management retreat is also planned to provide the chief executives of the member local government units the opportunity to interact with one another and strengthen their rapport and camaraderie thereby helping them recommit to the development objectives of the MKDA.

To date, the training for basic group facilitation for the project management staff and members of municipal technical working, and the workshop on operational framework have been completed.

Technology of Participation

Aside from the technical assistance at the municipal level, The Asia Foundation has also trained 189 local facilitators, municipal planning and development officers, municipal local government operations officers, other local officials and civil society representatives on the Technology of Participation (ToP). ToP is both a facilitation methodology and a planning tool. As basic facilitation methodology ToP values participation of stakeholders, consensus building and team work leading to action. As a planning tool, ToP emphasizes objectivity, timeliness and concrete actions. It is expected that participants trained under this methodology have become better equipped with the foundations of facilitative leadership centered on community participation.

Rapid Field Health Guide for ARMM Provinces

The Asia Foundation supported the development and pilot testing of a rapid field health guide in the province of Benguet in Cordillera. In partnership with the Network of Elected Filipino Women for Good Governance, TAG hopes to come up with a useful guide and methodology for health service deliverers in ARMM. To be able to come up with these, exhaustive research and review of all health data including existing road networks and health facilities will be made. Focus group discussions and interviews with health practitioners and community health workers will also be conducted to be able to come up with a viable picture on how an ideal local health delivery system is likely to work.

Books for Asia Program

The Asia Foundation's Books for Asia Program has distributed over 36 million books, and other educational materials for free to institutions all over Asia since 1955. More than 13 million books have been donated to municipal, city and public libraries; elementary and secondary schools; universities, and non-governmental organizations in the Philippines. Recently, sixty-nine boxes of books were sent to Zamboanga City and Cotabato City. This is a continuing effort to support the Transparent Accountable Governance Project of The Asia Foundation in fifty-seven municipalities in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and seven Mindanao cities. The free shipment of these 69 boxes of books was made in partnership with Aboitiz One, Incorporated.

Other Initiatives

The Asia Foundation gave a small grant to the Philippine Political Science Association (PPSA) to sponsor participants from Mindanao in the annual conference. The annual conference of the association provides a venue for political scientists, teachers of political and social science courses, social and political researchers and leaders from select non-governmental organizations to exchange their analyses and views on significant political events and phenomena in the Philippines and elsewhere. Among the relevant topics discussed at the conference were: perspectives on governance and citizenship, constitutional and electoral reforms, peace processes, globalization, the political economy of development strategies, the role of civil society in democratizing polities, security issues in the region, strengths and weaknesses of the Philippine Republic, identity and politics of Mindanao, Visayas and Thailand, and the state of Southeast Asian studies. More than a hundred participants attended the talks, thirteen of those from Mindanao were sponsored by The Asia Foundation